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SUBJECT: 2005 ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT: OMAN

REF: STATE 273089

1. (SBU) The following responses are keyed to relevant sections of refTel paras 18-21.

PARA 18: OVERVIEW

1A. Oman is not a country of origin, transit, or destination for internationally trafficked men, women or children.

PARA 19: PREVENTION

1B. The Royal Oman Police (which encompasses Oman's immigration, customs, and coast guard services) serves as the lead agency for enforcement of immigration and labor laws, as well as land and maritime border security. The Sultan's Armed Forces have at times also taken action to prevent illegal entry into the country by migrants. The Ministry of Manpower oversees implementation of labor regulations, including prohibitions against child labor. The Ministry of Social Development oversees much of the government's programs devoted to the welfare of women and children.

1C. There have been no government-run anti-trafficking public information or public education campaigns. The government does publicize, however, its efforts to apprehend and repatriate illegal migrants (primarily Pakistani and Iranian nationals).

1D. The Omani government actively promotes women's participation in the economy. Primary and secondary education is free for all students, and former gender disparities in the student population at all levels have been virtually eliminated. Women constitute just under 20 percent of the private-sector workforce, but over 30 percent of the public-sector workforce. The Sultan has appointed four women to ministerial rank in his government.

1E. The government has modest means to support prevention programs. It is actively engaged in public awareness campaigns against drug addiction and the spread of HIV/AIDS, for instance, and has fostered a network of more than 41 local chapters of the Oman Women's Association. UNICEF has a representative resident in Muscat, and more than 3,000 Omani women serve as UNICEF volunteers. Were trafficking in persons to become prevalent in Oman, the government would have some means to support prevention programs.

1F. The Omani government is working with other international organizations, such as the United Nations, to promote anti-trafficking legislation. According to local news sources, within the reporting year, Oman sent official delegations to a seminar entitled "Combating Trading in Persons and Human Parts," and to the International Center for Prevention of Crime in Austria to discuss, inter alia, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and the Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea. The government regularly discusses issues related to illegal migration with the governments of Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and Iran.

1G. The Omani government adequately monitors its borders and migration patterns for evidence of trafficking in persons. Oman cooperates with other states to interdict alien smuggling, and has instituted a special visa regime applicable to certain countries of concern (primarily in Eastern Europe and Asia) designed to thwart the entry of person deemed likely to engage in the sex trade. The government has from time to time offered free passage for migrants to return to their countries. Both the Sultan's Armed Forces and the Royal Oman Police Coast Guard have invested considerable resources to improve monitoring and defense of its maritime and land borders, to include modern patrol vessels, aircraft, and sensor equipment.

PARA 20: INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

1A. No new relevant legislation has been adopted since the 2004 report. However, the Basic Law of Oman (1996) prohibits compulsory labor.

1B. No changes.

1C. No changes.

1L. Child sex tourism does not exist in Oman.

1M. The government has ratified ILO Convention 182 and ILO Convention 29 and ratified the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children

PARA 21: PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

1B. The Omani government relies on foreign embassies and charitable groups to tend to foreign nationals requiring repatriation. The Omani government has underwritten most of the costs of deporting more than 10,000 Pakistani migrants annually (on average), as well as financing the construction of a dedicated deportation detention facility. These illegal migrants are not, however, believed to be victims of trafficking.

1G. No.

12. (SBU) Embassy POC for TIP is Pol/Econ Officer Cynthia Plath, (968) 24-698-989, ext. 393; fax: (968) 24-694-355; email: plathc@state.gov. Preparation time: FS-02: 3 hours; FS-05: 5 hours.
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